The Spirit and the Holy Spirit in the Qur’an

By Mustafa Mlivo

And they ask you about the Spirit. Say: "The spirit is by the command of my Lord, and you have been given only a little knowledge." (Qur’an, 17:85)

What is Spirit? What is a revelation? Who brings it? Is Spirit a substance or not, a material or immaterial thing, simple or complex? Salvation does not depend on such mysterious and delicate things, nor was it the main theme of God's messengers.

The essential nature of Ruh (Spirit) is directing, because it emanates from God's directing energy, although we do not know how the Divine "emr" works as the ego of an individual. Spirit, then, is the vibrational aspect of Source Energy. It is an energy associated with a high-vibrational multidimensional energy reality. Spirit is a connection to Source, a matrix of energy that exists in dimensions beyond the physical. The energy vibration of a thing is a reflection of its qualities, purpose or function and vice versa.

The word Spirit has been assigned different meanings by different schools of Islamic thought. According to some commentators, it refers to the angels and especially to Jibril. Some believe that it is the word of God, and some commentators believe that the Ruh here refers, specifically, to the revelation of the Qur'an, while others mean by it the "soul", especially the human soul. This last interpretation, however, is unconvincing, inasmuch as the preceding and following verses expressly refer to the Qur'an, and thus to the phenomenon of God's revelation. The fact is that according to the Qur'an, all creation is classified into two categories: (a) original creation, which is carried out without the help of previously created substance or matter, (b) subsequent creation, which is accomplished with the help of previously created matter. The first type falls under the category of emr (command), and the second is known as halk (creation). According to the verse (17:85) Spirit belongs to the first category.

Spirit as the bringer of Revelation

To clarify this, let's look at the following verses of the Qur'an.
Say: Who is the enemy of Jibril? Indeed, he sends it down on your heart, with the permission of Allah, confirming what was before it, and the Guidance and the glad tidings to the believers. (Quran, 2:97)
Say: The Holy Spirit sends it down from your Lord with the Truth, to strengthen those who believe, and (as) guidance and glad tidings to the Muslims. (Qur'an, 16:102)
And indeed, it is the Revelation of the Lord of the worlds, the Spirit of trust has

descended with it, on your heart, that you may be of the admonitioners. (Quran, 26:192, 193, 194)

From the verse (2:97) it is clear that the bearer of revelation is Jibril. The verse (16:102) informs us that it is the Holy Spirit that descends it, while the verse (26:193) says that the reliable (faithful) Spirit descended with the Qur'an. The conclusion is unequivocal: the Holy Spirit is actually a reliable Spirit, that is, that Spirit is Jibril.

The Holy Spirit as help and strengthening of Jesus a.s.

Isa (Jesus) a.s. in his short but stormy mission, he had the direct help and reinforcement of the Holy Spirit: "help him with the Holy Spirit" (2:87); then (2:253) "we helped him with the Holy Spirit", and (5:110) "I helped you with the Holy Spirit."

From the earlier consideration of the verses (2:97, 16:102 and 26:193) it follows that the Holy Spirit is Jibril. Jibril is said to possess fierce powers/energies, (53:5); that he is the possessor of strength, (53:6); that he appeared to Muhammad a.s. on the highest horizon, (53:7); that he is a noble envoy, (81:19); possessor of power, respected by the Owner of the Arsh, (81:20); listened to, trusted there, (81:21).

Jesus a.s. as Word and Spirit from Allah

O the followers of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your faith and speak only the truth about Allah. The Messiah, Jesus*, the son of Mary, is only the Messenger of Allah and His Word that He sent to Mary - and the Spirit from Him. (4:171)*

The word (kalimah) here does not suggest that it alone acted as the sperm that caused Mary's pregnancy, nor that an innocent conception is possible. The meaning of kalimah is "word," "decree," "command," "prediction." Jesus was born as a kalimah from Allah, in other words, the fulfillment of a promise (3:45), prophecy or decree of Allah. It is similar with Yahya (3:39), when Allah promised Zakariyya the birth of a son, (kalimah) even though his wife was an old woman. She was healed and enabled to give birth: see the verse (21:90)!

As for the expression "Spirit from Him", it should be noted that among the various meanings that the word ruh carries in the Qur'an, it is also used in its primary meaning of "breath of life", "spirit": for example, in (32:9) , where the continuous evolution of the human embryo is spoken of: and then He formed it (i.e. man) and breathed into it His spirit. In the verse in question, which emphasizes the pure human nature of Jesus and refutes the belief in his divinity, the Qur'an points out that Jesus, like all other human beings, was "a soul created by Him."

In the verse (4:171), Jesus's attributes are mentioned: (a) that he is the son of a woman, Mary, and that is why he is a man, (b) also a messenger with a mission from

Allah, and because of this he was honored, (c)) the word given to Mary, (d) Spirit from Allah, but not Allah: his life and his mission had more limitations than some other prophets. The doctrine of the trinity, equality with Allah, and sonship, were rejected as blasphemy. Allah is independent of all needs and does not need a son to manage His affairs. The Gospel of John (or whoever wrote it) contains a lot of Alexandrian and Gnostic mysticism about the doctrine of the Word (Greek, logos), but it is simply explained here.

Breathing of the Spirit into man, (15:29, 32:9, 38:72)

When it comes to man, his Spirit has the potential to know itself as part of the Source, as part of the Unity, as the place from which everything is born. If Spirit and Soul are two aspects of ourselves, then what distinguishes one from the other, at a fundamental level, is their vibration. Although they have distinctly (though perhaps subtly) different vibrations, they intermingle and interact. The spirit is pure always and forever. It is our distilled essence. Our divine spark. Through our senses, like intuition, for example, we communicate with the Spirit within us and our vibration is raised.

In the Qur'an, Allah addresses His Messenger and says: *You are dead, and indeed, they are dead (Ez-Zumar, 30).* That is you live by Me, you hear by Me, you speak by Me. This is the peculiarity of every man, he lives with the help of Allah, he hears and sees with the help of Allah - because man is dead in his being. He does not live by means of his being. In their existence, everyone relies on the One and Only One who created everything, who in his unity is independent of anything. In the words "you are dead" there is a sharpness that awakens feelings. Man is warned about the state he is in, and the state that awaits him.

The key component of a man's being is, therefore, his spirit - and in this context it means the principle of vitality, feeling and voluntary movement (will and physical strength). Our spirit is not our soul. These are our two separate parts. Our spirit enables us to climb, run or fight. Even if our soul is bruised and our heart is weak, our spirit can enable us to continue living on a physical level as we seek the possibility of healing.

The verse (15:29) with the expression "I breathed in" emphasizes the breath of Allah's Spirit into man, i.e. the spark of life, the faculty of will, cognition, and movement, which, if properly used, gives him superiority over other creatures. After the fertilization of the egg, a new life appears and it gradually takes shape, its limbs are formed; his life starts to work. The fourth stage mentioned in the verse (32:9) is the stage of a recognizable man in whom the Spirit of Allah has been breathed, which elevates him above other living beings.

Breathing of the Spirit into Mary and Jesus

The breathing of the Spirit into Mary is described in the verse (21:91), *"we breathed into her from Our spirit",* while the verse (66:12) talks about the breathing of the Spirit into Jesus while he was still in his mother's womb.
The birth of Jesus should not be assumed to imply that Allah was his father in the sense that Greek mythology makes Zeus the father of Apollo through Latona or Minos of Europe. And yes, that is the doctrine that the Christian idea of "the only begotten son of God" leads to.

Spirit of "Command"

Regarding the Spirit of command, three ways are given in the Qur'an by which it reaches the recipient, i.e. man or any other creature. One way is for the angels to descend with him (16:2); the second is that Allah "throws" it on whom He wills among His servants, and the third, that the Spirit is "revealed / inspired."

The term Ruh (spirit) in the Qur'an often means "revelation." In this context, it obviously means the content of God's Revelation / inspiration given to the prophet Muhammad, a.s., i.e. The Qur'an (Taberi, Zamakhseri, Razi, Ibn-Kesir), which should lead a person to a more intense spiritual life. Revelation is one of those high experiences that cannot be explained in terms of our everyday lives. It is spiritual. The spirit does not come of its own accord. He comes at the command of Allah, and announces what Allah orders him to announce. Only a small part of God's knowledge can be understood by a mere mortal!

Spirit as a medium that transmits and carries out the command of Allah: verses (16:2, 17:85, 40:15, 42:52, 58:22).

There are two worlds. The first is 'alem al-emr (the world of command) and the second is 'alem al-halk (the world of creation). The connection between the world of commandment and the world of creation is Spirit. The spirit belongs to the world of command, but it produces action in the material world by order of Allah. Spirit (ruh) and order (emr) are inseparable. While *emr* appeared, there is immediately a spirit that realizes emr; and Allah knows best.

Helping and strengthening with the Spirit

As said before Jesus a.s. had direct help and reinforcement from the Holy Spirit, which is highlighted in verses (2:87), then in (2:253), and (5:110). But not only Jesus was helped by the Spirit - the believers are also helped, that is, strengthened by the Spirit of Allah (58:22).

You will not find people who believe in Allah and the Last Day and love the one who opposes Allah and His Messenger, even if it were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their relatives. For such, he inscribed faith in their hearts and strengthened them with the Spirit from Himself. And he will lead them into gardens under which rivers flow, they will be in them forever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. Such are the party of Allah! Isn't it, indeed, the party of Allah - they are successful!? Quran, (58:22)

Here we realize that all good and righteous people are believers strengthened by the Spirit from Allah. If anything, the phrase used here "by the spirit of Himself" has power in itself. Whenever a man offers his heart in faith and purity to God, God accepts it and further strengthens him with His help that we can no longer adequately define, just as we cannot define the nature of God and His attributes with human language.

Materialization of the Spirit, (19:17-35)

Then We sent Our Spirit to her, and he showed himself to her as a true man. (The spirit) said: I am only a messenger of your Lord, to give you a pure boy. He said: Where did I get a boy, and I have not been touched by a man and I am not a harlot? (He) said: So! Your Lord said: 'That is easy for Me' - and to make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us - and the matter was determined. So she conceived him, and retreated with him to a distant place.

The spirit is described in some verses as a medium through which Revelation (inspiration) is transmitted to God's elect. However, in the case of Mary's conception, God sent the Spirit to Mary "in the form of a perfect man", i.e. in a form accessible to her perception. The spirit was therefore sent as a real man with all human characteristics and a unique task from Allah: "to give Mary a pure boy." God's law of human creation and reproduction is set forth in the verses: (32:8) from "extract of liquid despised"; (76:2) from "seed mixtures"; (49:13) of "male and female"; (53:46) from "drops of seed when expelled"; (86:6) from "the gushing liquid."

Ascension and descent of angels and the Spirit

Regarding the descent and ascension of angels and the Spirit, see the comments (70:4): "the age of the universe," "the speed of time," and "the dilation of time and the speed of light." The very concept of "time" is meaningless in relation to God, who is timeless and infinite. In the last sentence of the verse (22:47) it says *"And truly, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years from what you count*": in other words, a day, or an eon, or a thousand years, or fifty thousand years are similar to Him, they have an apparent reality only within the created world, and none with the Creator.

And considering that in the Hereafter, time will cease to have meaning for man, it is irrelevant to ask "when" the criminals will be punished and the righteous will be satisfied. In the verses (70:4 and 97:4) it is important to note that in both cases, and the ascension and descent of the angels and the Spirit, the Spirit and the angels appear in parallel, which clearly indicates that these are different entities and qualities united on a possible common task!

Alignment of the Spirit and the angels, (78:38)

On the Day of Judgment, the alignment of the Spirit and the angels will take place.

"On the Day when the Spirit will stand and the angels lined up,no one will speak, except for the one whom the Most Gracious allows - and he will speak correctly."

That is the Day when man will see what his hands have sent in advance and when the unbeliever will say: Oh that I am dust!

Prepared by:
Mustafa Mlivo, author of the first translation of the Quran into the Bosnian language.

http://www.mlivo.com
mustafamlivo@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/mustafa.mlivo

August 14, 2022.

